Call for Applications

“Philosophies of Technology in Intercultural Perspective”
A summer school beyond disciplinary boundaries with Yuk Hui

The Forum Scientiarum of Tübingen University in collaboration with the Society for Intercultural Philosophy (GIP) is organizing an international summer school on *Philosophies of Technologies* at the University of Tübingen, Germany. The summer school is open to doctoral students in philosophy, sociology, social anthropology, history, art history, literature, but also technical studies and other related subjects. Applications are welcome from all over the world.

Date: July 27th-31st, 2020
Venue: Forum Scientiarum, University of Tübingen, Germany
Application Deadline: April 15th, 2020
Organization: Dr. Niels Weidtmann and Fernando Wirtz, University of Tübingen, Germany

Topic

“Philosophies of Technology in Intercultural Perspective”

In Western philosophy, technology is understood in such a way that humans make use of the laws of nature for creating cultural artefacts, i.e. that humans copy the functionality of nature. In this way, humans have gained a set of instruments that enables them to decouple their cultural development from biological evolution. At the same time, this has led to an instrumental understanding of nature that has recently come under increasing criticism.

There has been a trend within different disciplines like anthropology, ethnology and archeology that acknowledges this point and seeks to rehabilitate non-Western cosmologies. Authors worth mentioning here are Bernard Stiegler, Philippe Descola, Bruno Latour, Donna Haraway and Eduardo Batalha Viveiros de Castro. One author who particularly works in this direction is Yuk Hui. In his book *The Question Concerning Technology in China* (2017), he proposes to break with the functional Western concept of technology using the idea of ‘cosmotechnics’, which he preliminary outlines as “the unification between the cosmic order and the moral order through technical activities” (2017, 19). Is it possible to think of a notion of technology able to overcome the discontinuities between nature and culture? Departing from the aforementioned definition, Hui points out that in Chinese philosophy (at least until the 19th century), the notion of a ‘technical object’ (*qi*, 器) is always subordinate to the cosmological and moral order of *Dao* (道). In this way Chinese thought understands nature as being primarily moral. By carefully reconstructing Chinese sources and its
different schools Hui is able to deliver an alternative genealogy of technology and, in doing so, an alternative concept for it.

Far from arguing in favour of cultural particularism, this strategy rather encourages further research about the discursive practices through which problems regarding technology become manifest. In this sense, as Hui writes, “cosmotechnics proposes that we reapproach the question of modernity by reinventing the self and technology at the same time, giving priority to the moral and the ethical” (2017, 290). This should not mean that there are no cosmotechnics in the West at all. On the contrary, what this concept implies is that the Western understanding of technology should be seized as one of multiple cosmotechnics and that we should rehabilitate the moral dimension of ontology. Therefore, Hui’s goal does not consist in returning to ancient and more authentic forms of mediation, but to destigmatize the role of cultural pluralism within philosophical debates. His focus on technology seems to provide fruitful ground for an intercultural dialogue.

Organisation

The purpose of this summer school adheres to the above and promotes a dialogue among PhD candidates interested in the task of thinking philosophies of technology beyond the Western tradition, transgressing and problematizing at the same time the categories of nature and culture themselves. In doing so, this summer school will explore new theoretical and practical approaches to address challenges posed by the Anthropocene.

Morning sessions will be given by Professor Dr. Yuk Hui. Participants must present a 15-minute paper during afternoon sessions that critically discusses one of the themes and/or questions of the summer school. Engagement with current research questions and issues are particularly welcome as well as connections with current PhD projects.

There will be additional keynotes at the evening.

Application

This summer school is open to doctoral students from all disciplines (applications of master students will be considered in exceptional cases).

Applicants should supply the following documents:

- Application form (available here: https://uni-tuebingen.de/de/174318 )
- CV (2 pages max)
- 300-word expression of interest
- paper title and 300-word abstract
Applications should be sent until April 15th the latest to info@fsci.uni-tuebingen.de or to our postal address:

FORUM SCIENTIARUM
Doblerstr. 33
D-72074 Tübingen
Germany

A letter of admission will reach successful applicants by the end of April.

There is a registration fee of 50 EUR for non-members of the Society for Intercultural Philosophy (GIP) which has to be paid upon admission.

Biographies

**Yuk Hui** is associate professor of philosophy of technology and media at the School of Creative Media, City University of Hong Kong. Previous to that, he taught at the Bauhaus University in Weimar and at the institute of philosophy of the Leuphana University Lüneburg where he also wrote his habilitation thesis. Since 2015 he has been a visiting professor of philosophy and technology (with qualification of PhD supervision) at the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou, where he co-teaches a master class with Bernard Stiegler every year. He is initiator of the Research Network for Philosophy and Technology, an international network which facilitates researches and collaborations on philosophy and technology; and jury member of the Berggruen Prize for Philosophy and Culture. Hui is author of *On the Existence of Digital Objects* (2016), *The Question Concerning Technology in China. An Essay in Cosmotechnics* (Urbanomic, 2017), and *Recursivity and Contingency* (2019), and forthcoming *Art and Cosmotechnics*.

**Niels Weidtmann** is President of the Society for Intercultural Philosophy and Director of the interdisciplinary institute Forum Scientiarum at the University of Tübingen. Niels does research in intercultural philosophy, phenomenology, hermeneutics and philosophical anthropology. Niels has held a guest professorship at the University of Vienna in 2016. He is author of a couple of books and has published a wide range of articles. He is president of the Society of Intercultural Philosophy.

**Fernando Wirtz** has studied Philosophy at the University of Buenos Aires. He has written his dissertation on Schelling and Creutzer at the University of Tübingen. Intercultural Philosophy, Global South Studies, Japanese Philosophy, German Idealism. He currently is Research Assistant at the Forum Scientiarum, University of Tubingen.